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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of the recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

United Nations Environment Programme**

Summary

The present report responds to recommendations made to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) since the second session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, where applicable and relevant. Furthermore, it addresses the main activities, programmes and projects that UNEP has been undertaking with indigenous peoples and on indigenous issues. A special focus has been placed on the Arctic indigenous peoples and climate change. These projects, as well as the enhanced engagement and participation of indigenous peoples as a major group in the regional and the global annual civil society meetings, as well as the Governing Council sessions of UNEP, have seen considerable development and progress in recent years. UNEP plays a significant role in catalysing action to protect the environment through collaboration with the multitude of major groups actors who share the same purpose. The UNEP strategy on enhancing major groups engagement is based on engagement at the policy level to take into account the expertise and views of major groups at the intergovernmental level, and on the programmatic level in implementation of the UNEP work programme. In the current 2007-2008 regional and global civil society meeting cycle, three indigenous representatives were elected from civil society representatives to represent either their region or their major group

* E/C.19/2008/1.

** Submission of the present report was delayed in order to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

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at the upcoming ninth Global Civil Society Forum and tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be held in Monaco in February 2008. This improved participation is correcting the previous underrepresentation of indigenous peoples as a major group and brings the regional and local perspective of indigenous peoples and their communities regarding today's environmental challenges onto the global agenda of UNEP.

UNEP would especially like to bring to the attention of the Forum the work it has initiated following a recommendation to UNEP from the Forum in 2006 to develop a specific policy on indigenous peoples. That important task is under way and will also address the UNEP contribution to the realization of the declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples. A first draft of the declaration was discussed with indigenous peoples representatives during the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bali in December 2007, and is being revised through widespread consultations in January and February 2008. UNEP also launched a website on indigenous peoples issues in March 2007.[a]

[a] http://www.unep.org/indigenous/.

I. Responses to recommendations addressed exclusively to the United Nations Environment Programme under one or more areas of the Permanent Forum mandate on Indigenous Issues

1. No recommendations were made to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its sixth session.

A. Recommendations made by the Forum at its fifth session[1]

Paragraph 15

2. In 2006, UNEP initiated work towards a UNEP indigenous peoples strategy by drafting a document in order to respond to the recommendation of the Forum in 2006. During the UNEP Governing Council held in Nairobi in February 2007, 15 indigenous peoples representatives were asked about their priorities, interests and concerns regarding the environment, UNEP work and possible ways of engagement. Their priorities were integrated in the first draft of the UNEP indigenous peoples strategy. Remaining funds, although limited, allowed UNEP to plan and undertake a consultation process among indigenous peoples organizations, the Inter-Agency Support Group as well as UNEP staff, with the assistance of two organizations. A first draft was developed which was discussed in Bali during the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with approximately 50 indigenous peoples representatives. An electronic consultation among approximately 250 indigenous peoples organizations as well as Inter-Agency Support Group members is currently being undertaken. A consultation among UNEP staff will be organized for the months of February and March 2008. It is planned to present the consolidated version of the draft to the Executive Director later in the year for his approval. Due to a limited funding situation, the consultation process and the time and the amount of persons to be consulted is restricted. It is hoped to organize relevant consultative meetings or side events in the Forum or similar relevant forums to take the draft further in its development in the future.

B. Recommendations made by the Forum at its second session[2]

Paragraph 50

3. At its second session, the Forum recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme report on the feasibility of developing mechanisms for indigenous peoples to participate in the persistent organic pollutants global monitoring programme and the evaluation process under the Stockholm Convention.

4. During the ninth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in Dubai in February 2006, the International Conference on Chemical Management

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 23* (E/2006/43).
[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 23* (E/2003/43).

adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.[3] This global initiative is aimed at making chemicals safer for humans and the planet and covers risk assessments of chemicals and harmonized labelling up to tackling obsolete and stockpiled products. Over 100 environment and health ministers agreed to meet the commitment made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

5. Among the institutions or networks working towards the elimination of pollutants is the International Persistent Organic Pollutant Elimination Network (IPEN). The mission of IPEN is to work for the global elimination of persistent organic pollutants, on an expedited yet socially equitable basis.[4]

6. UNEP has a specific mercury programme based in the Chemicals Branch of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics. In its decision 21/5, the UNEP Governing Council invited UNEP to undertake a global assessment of mercury and its compounds to be presented to the Governing Council at its session in February 2003. The global mercury assessment report was published in December 2002. At its twenty-fourth regular session, in February 2007, the Governing Council recognized that efforts to reduce risks from mercury were not sufficient to address the global challenges posed by mercury and concluded that further long-term international action is required. In decision 24/3, it called for a review and assessment of the options of enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments in order to make progress in addressing this issue. Two major areas of work set out in the decision comprise the strengthening of the UNEP mercury programme partnerships and the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group of Governments, regional economic integration organizations and stakeholder representatives to review and assess options for enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments. The open-ended working group met in November 2007 and will provide a progress report and a further report to the twenty-fifth session of the UNEP Governing Council (see http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/default.htm).

Paragraph 56

7. The concept of an extensive global survey as originally planned, including wide stakeholder and indigenous peoples participation, had to be abandoned due to the lack of timely received funds. UNEP and UNESCO, together with the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat, held various consultative meetings on the approach of a survey on environment and cultural diversity, as requested in UNEP Governing Council decision GC 22/16. The final report took into account previous studies, in-house research on the topic, as well as the findings and results of the consultative meetings with UNESCO and the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat, and makes suggestions for possible developments in the area of environment and cultural diversity for UNEP. No decision was taken nor adopted by the Governing Council on the topic during its twenty-third session, in 2005. The report on environment and cultural diversity is also downloadable from the UNEP website.[5]

[3] http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/.

[4] For more information on IPEN and other networks working with pollutants elimination, see http://ipen.ecn.cz/index.php?z=&l=en&k=home.

[5] UNEP/GC.23/INF/23; available at http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-INF23.pdf.

Paragraph 71

8. The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants entered into force on 17 May 2004 and targets 12 hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals. The Stockholm Convention made its debut on the world stage in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 2 to 6 May 2005, at a meeting of 800 government officials and observers committed to ridding the world of some of the most dangerous chemicals ever created. While the risk level varies from one persistent organic pollutant to another, they all share four properties: they are highly toxic; they are stable and persistent, lasting for years or decades before degrading into less dangerous forms; they evaporate and travel long distances through the air and through water; and they accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife. It was the contamination of marine mammals and thus the presence of persistent organic pollutants in the human food chain of indigenous peoples in the Arctic that were among the first alarm signs, waking the world to the threats of these long lived, hard to break down, hazardous chemicals.[6]

II. Responses to recommendations addressed to two or more agencies or to the United Nations system in general under one or more items of the Forum's mandate/agenda

A. Recommendations made by the Forum at its third session[7]

Paragraphs 5 and 75

9. The UNEP programme of work 2004-2005 included a commitment to make gender a cross-cutting priority in all of its programmes. In the domain of international environment governance, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building requests UNEP to integrate specific gender-mainstreaming strategies, as well as education and training for women, in formulating relevant policies, and to promote the participation of women in environmental decision-making. In 2004, pursuant to the Global Women's Assembly on the Environment, Governing Council decision 23/11 on gender equality in the field of the environment underlined the need to improve UNEP internal capacity in these respects.[8]

10. UNEP Governing Council decision GC 23/11 does not address explicitly indigenous women but has many entry points to include indigenous women's concerns and issues in its implementation, for example regarding the importance of integrating into national sustainable development strategies and into poverty reduction strategy papers gender equality and the particular role of women as natural resource managers, as well as to develop, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, a mentorship programme which would encourage young women to take an active role in environmental policy formulation and decision-making.

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[6] For more information, see: http://www.pops.int/.

[7] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 23* (E/2004/43).

[8] See http://www.unep.org/gc/gc23/documents/GC23-Proceedings.doc.

11. In April 2005, a comprehensive implementation plan was drafted which defines the role that UNEP will play in stimulating and facilitating efforts, both in-house and with partners at the national, regional and global levels, to overcome constraints and take advantage of opportunities to promote gender equality and equity within the environmental sector. The plan outlines a framework for integrating a gender perspective within all UNEP divisions, branches, units and activities during the period 2006-2010. It establishes strategies with reachable targets and proposes instruments to address gender concerns in UNEP technical areas. UNEP substantive activities under the plan are concentrated in four spheres: policy, organizational, delivery and constituency. The following extract from its introduction is relevant to indigenous peoples:

> "Gender equality and equity are prerequisites to poverty eradication and sustainable development. The livelihoods of rural and indigenous peoples and those of communities living in poverty are often closely tied to the environment. In these communities, women play a leading role in caring for their families and communities, in sharing their intellectual and social capital, and in protecting and managing natural resources. In many societies, both women and men are agents of change, but their contributions do not receive equal recognition. Gender equality between women and men has a cumulative effect of improved environmental management and protection and poverty alleviation for communities."[9]

12. A senior gender adviser was appointed in 2007 to UNEP to organize and implement the UNEP action plan for gender. UNEP began implementing its gender plan of action from late 2006, with a series of gender mainstreaming workshops for UNEP staff and senior management at the division and regional office level. As of December 2007, a strong gender team composed of 40 representatives from the divisions and regional offices has been established. The gender team members are regular staff members who have been nominated by their senior management to work with the senior gender adviser in mainstreaming gender into UNEP work and follow through the implementation of the gender plan of action.[10]

B. Recommendations made by the Forum at its second session[11]

Paragraph 79

13. UNEP is currently undertaking a revision of previous work undertaken in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on children's environmental health issues. The 2002 publication *Children in the New Millennium: Environmental Impact on Health* is currently being reviewed and updated in order to mainstream indigenous children's health in various chapters. The book as a whole deals with different environmental threats to child health. It aims to reflect the most current research and examples, and is written in the form of basic, practical messages for the country and community levels. It is modelled on the acclaimed UNICEF "Facts for life" publications. The focus of the publication is translating knowledge that has been gained into

[9] For the full action plan, see http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/Unep-Gender-Action-Plan-5Feb07.pdf.

[10] For further information and details, see also http://www.unep.org/gender_env/.

[11] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 23* (E/2003/43).

implementation/capacity-building at the country level — taking advantage of the blend of normative and operational strengths that the UNEP-UNICEF-WHO partnership offers.

III. Information regarding the Forum's special emphasis on indigenous children and youth[12]

14. UNEP has expanded its network for children and youth organizations, increased the frequency and substantive base of its processes for young people and signed several partnership agreements with youth-related organizations. UNEP has also increased the frequency and regularity of its conferences and publications for children and youth. Tunza conferences for young people are held every year (one year for children and the next year for youth). The Tunza magazine is published on a quarterly basis, and a series of Tunza environmental storybooks for children is published regularly. Regional and subregional networks have been developed and UNEP regional offices have active programmes for young people. The programme is divided into four focus areas: information exchange, awareness-building, youth in decision-making processes and capacity-building.[13]

15. The Tunza International Youth Conference, held in Leverkusen, Germany, in August 2007, had four indigenous youth representatives — two from Canada and two from Ecuador. In addition to attending the Conference, the four youth were accorded the opportunity to share their experience on their environmental work with 120 other young people from other countries. This opportunity also enabled them to join a global network of young people working on environment which continues to share information on the environment, beyond the conference.

16. The 2008 International Children's Conference has applications from indigenous children and efforts will be made by UNEP headquarters to ensure the representation of indigenous children in the Conference. The Conference will be held in Norway in June 2008. The Conference, whose theme is "A climate for change", will increase the children's understanding of environmental issues by providing them with a forum to share experiences and collectively voice their concerns for the environment. The daily topics of the Conference are "Energy", "Biodiversity", "Water" and "Production and consumption". The Conference will bring together 1,000 children and their chaperones from 104 countries.

17. Within 2008, the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific will host five subregional meetings, while the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean will host four subregional meetings. Both meetings will invite youth representatives from the indigenous communities to participate and share their experience and concern, as well as learn from the other participants about various environmental issues.

18. The Tunza magazine on forests published in late 2007 has articles on indigenous people and forests, while the Tunza magazine of 2006 on indigenous people and their ways of life continue to be distributed widely to youth organizations around the world; 10,000 copies of each series are distributed

[12] See also discussion above on the revised publication *Children in the New Millennium: Environmental Impact on Health*.

[13] For the whole programme, see http://www.unep.org/Tunza/.

worldwide to youth organizations. The web version of the magazines are also available on the UNEP Tunza website, which has a readership of 180,000 per month.

19. In 2007 UNEP published a children's book, *Tore and the Town on Thin Ice*, which is based on indigenous peoples in the Arctic and raises concerns on climate change. In the storybook, practical suggestions are made on mitigating the effects of climate change.

20. A new children's book to be published in 2008, *Togu and the Trees of Life*, also depicts a local community and its fear of the depleting forest on which it depends, and offers suggestions on how to conserve this important resource.

IV. Obstacles to the implementation of recommendations of the Forum

21. The main obstacle UNEP faces in implementing policies, programmes and projects relevant to indigenous peoples is inadequacy of staff resources as well as lack of funds.

V. Facilitating factors for the implementation of recommendations of the Forum

22. The adoption of the declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples will most likely become a facilitating factor in the future.

VI. Policies on indigenous peoples issues

23. As noted in paragraph 2 above, UNEP has initiated relevant steps and a draft is being circulated for comments from indigenous peoples and the Inter-Agency Support Group as well as UNEP staff.

VII. Other significant information regarding recent programmes, budgetary allocations and activities regarding indigenous issues

24. The project entitled "Indigenous peoples participation in the mapping of traditional forest resources for sustainable livelihoods and great ape conservation" is a collaboration between different UNEP programmes, namely between the Great Apes Survival Project and Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, and is being implemented by the World Wildlife Fund and the Forest Peoples Program/UK in Cameroon. The objective of the project is to engage the Baka peoples in Cameroon to participate effectively in protected areas management where great apes are under protection. It aims to support such communities to document through participatory mapping techniques their forest resource uses and to establish a dialogue with governmental and non-governmental conservation agencies in order to devise joint plans for the protection of community forest uses and the conservation of great ape species. The project's results are expected in July 2008.

25. The UNEP initiative "Mainstreaming environment and sustainability into African universities" is a UNEP flagship programme for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and its aim is to mainstream environment and sustainability concerns into the teaching, research, community engagement and management of universities in Africa. The programme provides a platform of dialogue among universities, civil society, communities and the private sector on sustainable development. It also aims to create opportunities for collaborative projects between the above-mentioned stakeholders.[14]

26. Global climate change has brought new challenges for education and training around the world. UNEP recognizes that environmental education needs to incorporate a better understanding and application of indigenous knowledge and traditional coping strategies in the context of climate change.

27. UNEP was formally requested by the Government of Nigeria to carry out a comprehensive environmental assessment of the Ogoni region and recommend suitable remedies based upon its findings. This request to UNEP was made as part of the broader Government-led peace and reconciliation initiative in the region, and within the programme framework for improving human development in the Niger delta, led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

28. UNEP has been engaged in negotiations with a wide range of stakeholders on this major project for over a year. Parties involved in this ongoing process include the Government of Nigeria, at both the federal and state levels, the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, and local residents and representatives, who attended a series of town-hall meetings conducted in 2007 at the community level. Bilateral meetings have also been held with representatives of particular interest groups. In addition, interviews have been conducted in Port Harcourt to recruit local project staff, including community liaison officers, who will work closely with residents of the four local government areas involved so as to ensure an optimum level of engagement with local residents.

29. The comprehensive environmental assessment will be led by the UNEP Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, which has conducted field-based, scientifically rigorous and politically neutral environmental assessments in more than 25 crisis-affected countries since its inception in 1999. As is each time the case, the survey of oil-impacted sites in Ogoniland will be scientifically independent, open and subject to scrutiny by the international scientific community.

30. The project will be undertaken in a manner that maximizes benefits to the community. Indeed, a number of measures have been taken to ensure that local communities are made aware of the project and are consulted, included and informed of progress at every stage of the mission, including:

31. UNEP will recruit community members from the four local government areas to act as community liaison officers for the project. As representatives of UNEP, community liaison staff will monitor local events and developments, ensure that the mission objectives and plans are communicated into the wider community and local government agencies, and manage consultative meetings with their communities. Community liaison staff will also act as an intermediary between local communities

[14] For more information, see www.unep.org/training.

and UNEP technical teams and establish a system of feedback to ensure that all community concerns and priorities are reported back into the project.

32. To ensure that the project objectives and plans are fully communicated to local audiences, UNEP will hold community consultations with the people of Ogoniland. The consultations will be organized through community liaison staff. UNEP actively encourages all community members to participate in these consultations to ensure that the needs and concerns of specific demographic groups — such as women, youth, academia, religious and traditional rulers — are met.

33. Campaigns will be implemented to raise awareness of the project at the local level. UNEP will ensure that regular press releases are circulated to local, national and international news teams, advising of the most up-to-date mission information. Regular interviews will be scheduled with local television and radio stations — allowing for details of the mission to be broadcast to a wider audience. A series of eye-catching posters and leaflets will also be distributed in local communities, advising of the UNEP project and progress. English, Pidgin and regional languages will be used. Finally, UNEP will make use of less conventional verbal and physical information-providing methods such as public speakers, town criers and street theatre performance.

34. In partnership with UNDP, UNEP aims to support Ogoni communities by building local capacity through training programmes. The programmes will be designed to strengthen local knowledge and enable communities to enhance their institutional and individual capabilities for development with minimal damage to the environment. Capacity-building programmes will include training on:

(a) Imparting sound environmental practices in every initiative (e.g., building);

(b) Providing technical support for implementation of regional — and possibly national or global — environmental policies;

(c) Encouraging public participation in environmental awareness and management by enhancing access to environmental information.

35. While the project was originally intended to commence mid-2007 and be completed by end-2008, the deterioration in the security situation has precluded fieldwork from starting. However, UNEP remains ready to mobilize at the earliest possible opportunity.[15]

36. Regarding the UNEP dams and development project, indigenous people have been addressed permanently along the process as one of the most vulnerable stakeholder groups affected by dam construction and operation. The aim of the project was to improve decision-making, planning and management of dams and their alternatives. The main efforts of the project focused on the strengthening of policy, legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure that environmental and social issues are duly accounted for in order to attain sustainable outcomes. Project activities were carried out on a multi-stakeholder basis, and indigenous groups were represented on the project steering committee. The participation of indigenous peoples' representatives was relevant at the global dialogue channelled through

[15] For more information on the UNEP undertaking in Ogoniland, see http://postconflict.unep.ch/ogoniland/.

project forum meetings, issues-based workshops and side events at relevant international meetings as well as the national dialogue activities carried out in about 20 countries all over the world.

37. The compendium on relevant practices for improved decision-making on dams and their alternatives constitutes one of the major outcomes of the project. It deals with a set of key issues concerning environmental and social aspects of dams and their alternatives. Stakeholder participation, including that of indigenous peoples, is a cross-cutting issue throughout the publication, in addition to being the subject of a separate chapter.[16] The project came to an end in April 2007; however, UNEP has elaborated on a programme proposal to mainstream environmental sustainability in planning and management of infrastructure-building on the experience and outcomes of the project.

38. The programmatic approach involves the documentation and dissemination of relevant practices addressing four major thematic clusters at the global, regional and national levels to strengthen normative and planning frameworks, to transfer technology and to train decision makers, managers and stakeholders in general. The clusters are options assessment, stakeholder participation, environmental assessments, and management and compliance. Stakeholder participation cuts across all four clusters besides being one itself, and it involves indigenous peoples as a most important group affected by planning and management of infrastructure.

39. Since 2004, all publications under the UNEP tourism programme that have focused on capacity-building at the local level have included the engagement of local communities and indigenous people as a priority element to have a sustainable tourism development. In particular, the publication *Tourism and Deserts: A Practical Guide to Managing the Social and Environmental Impacts*[17] has been used by some United Nations agencies and NGOs, among others, to train local communities (Tourneys, sub-Saharan tribes). The publication *Tourism and Mountains* has also been used to train local communities in Nepal.[18] These guides have a dedicated chapter on the engagement of local communities.

40. The Indigenous Peoples Network for Change project, a UNEP/Global Environment Facility (GEF) project initiated in 2005, is a global indigenous peoples initiative aimed at advancing the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by strengthening the capacity and knowledge of indigenous peoples to participate in processes surrounding the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international instruments. The project focuses on the achievement of four key outcomes:

(a) Increased awareness and capacity of indigenous peoples, with particular focus on indigenous women, with respect to the Convention and GEF and their processes;

(b) Increased contribution to and participation in the Convention and GEF processes at the national, regional and international levels by indigenous peoples, particularly women;

[16] See also www.unep.org/dams.

[17] http://www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library/Desert%20Guide.htm.

[18] http://www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library/TourismandMountain.htm.

(c) Effective regional and international coordination of the interaction of indigenous peoples with the Convention and GEF;

(d) Establish strategic partnerships and improved existing partnerships leading to a greater participation and emphasis on the role of indigenous peoples in conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity resources.

41. To realize these four key objectives, the project will implement an integrated range of activities involving capacity-building and information-sharing at the national and regional levels, dissemination and sharing of information between regions, partnership-building with relevant organizations at every level, and facilitation of participation in international processes.

42. In 2006, UNEP undertook a specific outreach and partnership campaign targeting indigenous peoples as a major group to provide technical support on environmental processes and to address their underrepresentation in the Global Civil Society Forum cycle. As a consequence of UNEP support, indigenous peoples representatives attended four of the regional consultation meetings and the eighth Global Civil Society Forum and Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fourth session, attesting the improved engagement of indigenous peoples and their communities in the policy development.[19] To date, eight indigenous peoples organizations are accredited to UNEP. It is hoped that more organizations will consider accreditation to UNEP in the future.[20]

43. UNEP has produced the *Global Environment Outlook* (GEO) reports providing assessments of the interactions between environment and society since 1997. The GEO report mandate is to keep the global environment under review, for which UNEP coordinated a series of scientific assessments that included extensive consultations and participatory processes, resulting in the production of GEO reports in 1997, 1999 and 2002. The fourth assessment, *Global Environment Outlook: Environment for Development* (GEO 4), is the most comprehensive GEO process to date and was published in October 2007. It was designed to ensure synergy between science and policy, while maintaining its scientific credibility and making it responsive to policy needs and objectives. Various chapters within GEO 4 make reference to indigenous peoples and their communities, namely in the context of how chemicals affect Arctic peoples, on interactions between biodiversity and culture notably the worldwide distribution of various levels of biodiversity with the distribution of languages, giving a grade of biocultural diversity, traditional knowledge, the polar regions and climate change as well as adaptation strategies.[21]

44. The "Many strong voices" programme is a unique alliance between the Arctic and small island developing States that aims to ensure the well-being of those regions in the face of climate change. It is driven by the need to protect the cultures, economies and environments of Arctic communities and small island developing States from the Caribbean, Pacific and other regions — two groups which are among those most affected by climate change.[22]

45. Work continued in 2007 to build the programme and support partners, which includes indigenous peoples from the Arctic and small island developing States. The

[19] http://www.unep.org/indigenous/.

[20] For the accreditation modalities, see http://www.unep.org/civil_society/About/accreditation.asp.

[21] See http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/.

programme held a successful stakeholders workshop in Belize in May 2007, coordinated by UNEP/GRID-Arendal, based in Norway, and the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research — Oslo, and hosted by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, based in Belmopan, Belize. The participants represented communities and organizations in the Arctic and small island developing States and came from 16 countries and regions, including Alaska, the Caribbean, Norway, Fiji, the Canadian Arctic, Micronesia, Greenland and French Polynesia. The workshop was funded by the Government of Norway and the United States National Science Foundation.

46. Workshop participants highlighted similar climate change effects, including the relocation of communities away from coastal areas due to sea level rise and frequent storm surges, and the human and economic impacts of changes to the marine resources upon which Arctic and small island developing States communities depend. Common issues included:

(a) The effects of climate change are being seen, felt and dealt with today in both the Arctic and small island developing States;

(b) Action on both adaptation and mitigation is urgently needed in the two regions;

(c) People in affected regions must have their voices heard in the adaptation and mitigation discussions at the local, regional and international levels;

(d) An alliance between the Arctic and small island developing States is vitally needed to protect the interests of both regions and work together on common issues relating to climate change.

47. The workshop attracted international and regional media attention, where indigenous peoples perspectives featured prominently in this coverage.

48. The "Many strong voices" programme supported partners from the Arctic and small island developing States in their efforts at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This was done by bringing people to the COP as speakers, organizing daily briefings, ensuring that the MSV messages were incorporated into a number of side event presentations, participating in joint outreach efforts, distributing written information, building the network, and establishing contact with new potential donors. An important part of this work was facilitating the drafting of an indigenous peoples statement.

49. The experience in Bali showed that there is a strong desire by people in the Arctic and small island developing States to join forces, support each other and coordinate activities in the context of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. GRID-Arendal is continuing to work with partners, including developing a five-year plan for the programme.[23]

50. An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic is a GEF-sponsored project initiated by Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group of the Arctic Council and the Russian Federation. The Management Approach is using an integrated ecosystem management strategy to

conserve biodiversity and minimize habitat fragmentation in three selected model areas in the Russian Arctic.

51. The model areas selected for the Management Approach are Kolguev Island in Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the Lower Kolyma River Basin in Yakutia (Sakha Republic), and the Beringovsky District in Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. The purpose of the Management Approach is to help to secure the integrity of some of the world's last remaining pristine areas and support livelihoods of indigenous and local peoples.

52. The project started in 2003 and will be completed in 2009. The Russian Association for Indigenous Peoples of the North is represented in the steering committee of the Management Approach.[24]

53. Environmental Co-management by Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North is a multi-year demonstration project under the UNEP/GEF project entitled "Russian Federation: support to the national programme of action for the protection of the Arctic marine environment". The project lead is the Batani Fund of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North.

54. The purpose of the demonstration project is to examine new effective mechanisms to balance the interests of indigenous peoples and industry in the Russian North. The demonstration project will operate in three model areas — Yamal Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Nenets Autonomous Okrug and Sakha Republic/Yakutia. The models will examine ways to ensure that the needs and rights of indigenous peoples are protected as industrial development proceeds. They will also provide industry with a forum to meet stakeholders and government and allow for the kind of planning that takes into account the needs of all parties.

55. The role of UNEP/GRID-Arendal in this project is to research and write a collection of case studies on indigenous co-management in Alaska, Canada and Scandinavia. The case studies are due in January 2008 and will be translated into Russian and used as background information for the project.

56. UNEP/GRID-Arendal edited and produced the World Environment Day assessment, *Global Outlook for Ice and Snow*, released on 5 June 2007. Contributing authors were asked to prepare content on impacts and issues related to indigenous people, and this material was featured in several chapters; overall guidance was provided by an Arctic indigenous member of the steering committee; and the final "Perspectives" section included brief write-ups on indigenous and local perspectives for the Arctic, small island developing States and the Himalayas.[25]

VIII. Capacity-building programmes

57. UNEP does not have a specific programme for capacity-building for staff on indigenous issues. It might be suggested in the course of the development of the UNEP strategy on indigenous peoples issues and then taken up in the future.

[24] http://www.grida.no/ecora/.

[25] http://www.unep.org/geo/geo%5Fice/PDF/full_report_LowRes.pdf.

IX. Activities regarding the goal, objectives and programme of action of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples

58. Through its ongoing process of developing a strategy on indigenous issues, UNEP will also include in its strategy relevant aspects and recommendations towards the implementation of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. UNEP is already working towards the enhancement of civil society engagement in general within its organizational structures, and strengthening the engagement of specific major groups, including indigenous peoples and their communities.

59. The UNEP Division on Environmental Law and Conventions is actively supporting various activities and initiatives on the role of local and indigenous communities. With regard to discussions under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Division is supporting negotiations on development of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. In addition, the Division closely follows and provides advice and inputs into the activities under the implementation of work programmes related to article 8 (j) of the Convention related to traditional knowledge. Currently, the Division is implementing a project on the role of communities in implementation of the Convention at the local level in Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Global Environmental Information Centre in Japan.

60. The Division, in collaboration with the United Nations University, undertook a capacity-building project in the South Pacific region on the theme "Role of customary law and practices in access and benefit-sharing, and traditional knowledge". The project provided a space for dialogue and exchange of knowledge and experience between different stakeholders about traditional knowledge and indigenous customary law for natural resources management.

61. Generally speaking, the UNEP projects located in the polar regions are responding to many of the suggestions and recommendations made on environmental issues within the action plan of the Second International Decade on the World's Indigenous Peoples. The projects described above make reference to climate change and other stressors, as well as adaptation and management of environmental and social impacts of climate change.

62. The UNEP projects on indigenous knowledge in disaster management in the Arctic region of the Russian Federation and African countries respond to paragraph 64 of the action plan, namely to develop and implement programmes and projects for natural disaster management at the national and community levels with the full and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples.

63. This project, led by the UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation and implemented by the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and the UNEP Key Polar Centre, based in Arendal, Norway, is based on structured interviews with reindeer herders, hunters, fishers and gatherers in the Nenets and Kamchatka regions of the Arctic region of the Russian Federation. Knowledge was documented on extreme weather events such as blizzards and heavy fogs, as well as floods, earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis. The UNEP Key Polar

Centre has provided the project with results analysis, database and website development, and assisted the Association in completing the project report.[26]

64. The Arctic project is linked with a project on indigenous knowledge in disaster management in Africa.[27]

X. Information and suggestions regarding the special theme of the next session of the Permanent Forum

65. The United Nations and UNEP will focus in the coming years on global warming and climate change issues. UNEP therefore recommends extending the climate change topic to the next session, including a focus on adaptation.

66. An additional important topic is indigenous peoples and their communities in pre-conflict and post-conflict situations.

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[26] http://www.raipon.org/ikdm/.

[27] http://www.unep.org/ik/.